

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES**May-June 1990***Africa****Sudan**

The ICRC resumed its regular flights to destinations in Sudan after a six-month interruption during which it had been able to carry out only a few technical flights. As from 3 May ICRC flights were made to the following places in accordance with a flight plan submitted each week to the two parties: Wau, Juba and Malakal from Khartoum; and Kongor, Leer and Bor from Lokichokio (Kenya). The aircraft carried ICRC staff and also seed, tools and various equipment necessary to implement veterinary programmes.

Road convoys continued to bring relief supplies to southern Sudan from the ICRC base in Lodwar despite poor weather conditions and an earthquake that damaged roads and destroyed a bridge. In the period under review two road convoys journeyed safely from Lodwar to Bor and Kongor. The ICRC also carried supplies by barge on the Nile, from Bor to Leer via Adal and to Yirol via Ghambe.

In addition to providing assistance to the people living in the regions affected by the internal conflict, the ICRC was called on to help those displaced as a result of tension at the border between Sudan and Chad. On 27 and 28 May, three ICRC flights delivered relief supplies (blankets, tarpaulins, soap, durra and vegetable oil) to El Fasher; from there the National Society organized distributions.

Ethiopia

On 19 June an agreement was concluded between the ICRC, the Ethiopian government and the National Society setting out the terms and conditions governing the work of the ICRC surgical teams sent to Ethiopia to supplement the medical personnel already on the spot.

In early June, as soon as the ICRC received official confirmation that its assistance to the war-wounded would be welcomed, a delegate and a doctor were sent to Bahr Dar, Dessie and Asmara to assess

surgical needs there. As local facilities for the reception and care of patients were found clearly insufficient to cope with the influx of wounded, the ICRC immediately dispatched several medical teams to the area. They arrived in Addis Ababa towards the end of the month, and a surgical team was already at work in Dessie by 24 June.

Somalia

A first ICRC road convoy left the port of Berbera on 26 May for Boroma via Hargeisa, carrying food supplies to the displaced people sheltering in the hills north-east of Boroma, whose living conditions had been found extremely precarious during a survey in February. Between 28 May and 1 June a total of 14,600 people received ICRC food aid. On the return journey delegates carried out surveys near Hargeisa.

In co-operation with the UNHCR, the Ethiopian and Somali governments and National Societies and its own delegation in Addis Ababa, the ICRC completed arrangements enabling it in July to begin repatriating Ethiopian refugees living in camps in north-west Somalia.

Uganda

Some 120,000 displaced persons grouped in more than ten camps in the Kumi district had still not been able to return to their villages by the end of June. Initially the ICRC had provided only non-food aid to these people since other organizations were supplying them with food. During the month of June, however, the growing insecurity caused these organizations gradually to withdraw. Faced with this critical situation, the ICRC agreed to take over food distributions as from July for a three-month period. In the last week of June, ICRC delegates registered about 8,500 recipients.

After a year's absence the ICRC returned to Kitgum, where it organized a series of dissemination talks, carried out medical surveys and resumed its tracing work. It also returned to Soroti, after a three-month interruption, to continue its tracing and protection activities for the civilian population there.

Mozambique

In May and June ICRC delegates carried out several missions overland to the areas affected by the conflict. In the province of Nampula they noted a lack of medicines and basic medical supplies, a problem which the ICRC hopes to remedy despite the hazardous

conditions and the difficulty of transporting and delivering goods to isolated areas accessible only on foot through the bush and forest.

Another mission to the province of Zambezia took considerably longer than expected owing to unsafe conditions. The delegates, who were unable to maintain contact with the ICRC during the mission, nevertheless managed to assess the needs of about 150,000 people living in isolated groups. There, too, the main problems noted were a lack of medicines and basic medical supplies, as well as inadequate sanitary facilities. However, the nutritional level of these people appeared satisfactory.

Liberia

Because of the rapidly deteriorating situation, particularly in the capital, Monrovia, the ICRC took steps to protect the civilian population. Following the attack in early June on the camp for displaced persons set up in the grounds of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) offices, the UN agencies withdrew from the country. Families subsequently took refuge in a centre run by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which was placed under the protection of the Red Cross emblem.

The National Society carried out thrice-weekly food distributions to displaced persons temporarily living with relatives or in makeshift shelters.

Faced with a massive influx of people seeking ICRC protection, the delegation in Monrovia opened a centre on 15 June in a Methodist school large enough to house up to 1,000 people. The National Society provided round-the-clock medical care and supplied food and other basic necessities to those sheltering there.

ICRC delegates also evacuated 60 foreign students at the request of the UNHCR, one of the agencies that had left the country in early June.

In the medical sphere the ICRC organized an ambulance service and, on the basis of a survey, decided to provide medical supplies and medicines to the hospitals and dispensaries in rebel-held territory.

Neighbouring countries continued to receive waves of refugees. In early June 10,000 people left Liberia for Sierra Leone, where the National Society had set up a tracing office.

Latin America

Nicaragua

From the outset of the negotiations which led to the disbanding of the Contras, the ICRC has signalled its interest in the peace process to the parties concerned and has on several occasions offered its services to help resettle the former Contra guerrillas.

During the demobilization in June, the ICRC delegation kept a close watch on the situation in case any protection or material assistance was needed. Material aid was planned for late June solely for displaced civilians (Jinotega and Bluefields) and for refugees returning to their homes (Puerto Cabezas and Rio Coco Arriba).

Apart from the delegation's activities in connection with the demobilization, the Toncontin agreement of 23 March 1990, which ended a 10-year conflict, allowed delegates to start scaling down their activities in places of detention as the security detainees whom the ICRC had been visiting had almost all been released. Where necessary, the amnestied prisoners and their families continued to receive ICRC assistance.

El Salvador

ICRC delegates were able to respond more effectively to the civilian population's needs in terms of medical care, protection and the exchange of family news. On their frequent visits to conflict areas the delegates observed that the situation was slowly returning to normal, although civilians continued to be killed and injured by indiscriminate attacks or abandoned explosives such as mines and grenades.

In June, ICRC delegates visited 94 places of detention and spoke to 221 prisoners there.

Panama

General Manuel Noriega, overthrown when the military regime in Panama was removed from power, was visited by an ICRC delegate for the second time along with two other Panamanian prisoners of war at the Metropolitan Correctional Centre in Miami, where they have been detained since January 1990.

Asia

Afghan conflict

In May and June ICRC delegates in Pakistan and Afghanistan continued their efforts to assist victims of the Afghan conflict. They carried out missions to numerous regions, including some to which they had never before had access.

In early June an ICRC team from Quetta (Pakistan) entered the city of Kandahar for the first time. The delegates contacted the local authorities there, assessed the medical facilities and undertook various tracing activities. Another team left Kabul to visit, also for the first time, the region of Shakardarah north of the capital. This initial mission in early May was followed by several more to assess the advisability of setting up a first-aid post and decide on its location. Negotiations to this end took place in Herat and Mazari-i-Sharif with the parties concerned.

Meanwhile the ICRC sent a fourth surgical team to its hospital in Kabul to cope with a high influx of wounded and numerous surgical interventions.

Sri Lanka

As soon as the clashes broke out, on 11 June, between government forces and LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) fighters in the north-east of the island, the ICRC contacted the two parties to remind them of its role in such situations. Emergency measures were taken and delegates carried out several surveys to determine the humanitarian assistance required by civilians affected by the events. They also visited persons arrested in connection with the events in Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Colombo.

In addition to its activities in the north-east, the delegation continued its other tasks, particularly visits to persons detained in connection with the inter-Sinhalese conflict. Since the visits first began in October 1989, over 16,000 prisoners have been seen in more than 280 places of detention, both in the capital and the provinces.

Cambodian conflict

In the belief that the exchange of news between Cambodians living in the border camps and their families who stayed in Cambodia has a significant impact on the decision of camp-dwellers to return home, the ICRC decided to increase its tracing activities for these people.

After a year of training, restructuring and painstaking work, a real flow of correspondence in the form of Red Cross messages had been established between camp-dwellers and their families in the period under review. The number of successfully completed tracing enquiries concerning people living in Cambodia also rose considerably. In June alone, for example, 130 such enquiries were resolved, in comparison with 188 for the whole of 1989.

Indonesia

On 22 May and 5 June the ICRC organized the departure of 45 people from East Timor to Portugal as part of a programme to send people to Portugal and Australia initiated by it ten years ago. Under the programme 930 people have so far left the country with the agreement of all parties concerned.

Middle East

Iran/Iraq

The ICRC continued to be concerned about the plight of prisoners of war captured by both sides during the conflict. It therefore submitted a plan for humanitarian action to Iran on 3 May and Iraq on 7 May. The plan calls for both parties to provide the ICRC with a list of all prisoners identified as wounded or sick who should be repatriated as soon as possible, and a list of all prisoners of war, whether they are already or are not yet registered, and whether or not they are interned. This would make it possible to notify the prisoners' countries of origin and families and allow the ICRC to set up a programme of visits which should begin in both countries one month after the handing over of the list.

The Director of Operations visited Tehran from 18 to 21 May and Baghdad from 8 to 12 June to discuss the plan with the authorities concerned.

Following these talks, a final version of the plan, taking into account the comments of the two countries' authorities, was submitted by the ICRC to the two parties in mid-June. It was accompanied by a *note verbale* asking for a formal reply from the governments in Tehran and Baghdad to the proposals.

In addition the ICRC, particularly its New York delegation, maintained contact with the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and representatives of several other countries to keep them informed about the plan and how it was received.

Iran

Following the earthquake on 21 June which destroyed entire villages, especially in the province of Gilan, the ICRC delegation did everything possible to find out whether the prisoners of war being held in the devastated areas had been affected. According to the authorities, only a few prisoners of war were injured. Message forms were handed over to the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran for rapid distribution to the prisoners concerned so that they would be able to reassure their families in Iraq as soon as possible.

At the same time, delegates in Iraq distributed similar message forms to those Iranian prisoners of war held there whose families were living in the stricken area.

Lebanon

While the ICRC continued to press for the release of its two delegates abducted in Sidon on 6 October 1989, the delegation in Beirut went on helping the victims of the Lebanese conflict. Working in conjunction with the Lebanese Red Cross, the ICRC continued to assist displaced families. It took relief supplies into the new Christian battle areas of Metn and Kesrouan and into the Iklim al Touffah region affected by the inter-Shi'ite conflict. The regular visits to hospitals and dispensaries to provide them with basic medical supplies were also continued, except when fighting was so intense as to force the delegation to suspend its work in certain areas.

Meanwhile, delegates carried on with their visits to places of detention, where they saw over 500 detainees in May and June. During the same period, the ICRC was present on two occasions when prisoners were released by the Lebanese Army commanded by General Aoun. The delegates checked the identity of those released and in some cases made arrangements for their return home. The Lebanese Forces also released a group of six detainees on 7 June.

Israel and the occupied territories

Violent clashes shook the occupied territories after the Rishom Le Zion shooting on 20 May. ICRC delegates helped take the injured to hospital and ensured that ambulances were able to do their work unhindered. ICRC teams visited hospitals and dispensaries, providing emergency medical supplies and putting the injured in touch with their families when necessary.

Finally, the ICRC issued a communication to the press stressing that for the second time in less than a month, the occupied territories had been the scene of violence and repression in which hundreds of people had been injured and dozens had died. The ICRC voiced its acute concern about the persistence and aggravation of the conflict and urged the occupying power to do everything it possibly can to ensure that the lives and physical integrity of the civilian population are respected.

Europe

Romania

After the clashes on 13 and 14 June in Bucharest, the ICRC offered its services to the Romanian government to visit people detained in connection with the events. The ICRC's approaches were backed up by a letter from Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, its President, to Mr. Ion Iliescu, the Romanian President. The Romanian authorities assented and visits to the places of detention began on 25 June. Unfortunately, the visits were broken off five days later by the authorities, who felt that it was a breach of Romanian law to allow ICRC delegates to have interviews in private, as required by the ICRC's criteria, with detainees awaiting trial. The ICRC immediately contacted the Romanian authorities to clarify the nature of their objection and obtain guarantees for the continuation of the visits in accordance with the ICRC's standard procedures.

Following the events of 13 and 14 June, the ICRC team also visited hospitals which had admitted casualties. It was partially thanks to supplies previously provided by the ICRC and National Societies that the hospitals in Bucharest were able to deal with the sudden influx of injured people.